

My name is Mark Nottingham and I am Chair of the IETF HTTPbis Working Group, currently working on HTTP/2.0, the next version of the foundation protocol of the Web. I'd like to give feedback on the public consultation document -- specifically, Chapter 2 (A), Free and User-friendly Digital Identity (ID).

The IETF is currently discussing enabling wider use of encryption to counteract the threat of "pervasive monitoring," among other potential attacks. It's already clear that TLS (Transport Layer Security, a.k.a. SSL) will be a critical component of this for many protocols, including HTTP. Deploying TLS on such a wide scale brings many challenges, not least of which is the procurement and management of certificates to identify Web sites.

If Hong Kong were to offer .hk Web sites free certificates to enable them to use TLS, I believe it would serve as an important testbed for this work, and would help us evaluate the deployment of more a more secure Web globally. One of the issues we face is understanding how much everyday Web sites will use TLS once the cost barriers are removed, and Hong Kong could help us measure this.

Furthermore, I expect there to be a growing number of initiatives to ease the deployment of encryption that will be complementary to Hong Kong's efforts here. By providing free certificates to your citizens and businesses, Hong Kong would both help secure its own interests as well as help develop a more secure Web.

Kind regards,

Mark Nottingham